

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

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(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED)

file

MR. FISCHER: Good afternoon. I have just one announcement I'm going to make, and then I'm going to have the briefing done by Alan today.

The announcement concerns an interview we have set up at 2:00 p.m. this afternoon with a Nicaraguan prisoner captured by the Salvadorans early in 1981. The interview has to be pooled, and we have chosen the following people to be members of the pool: Barrie Dunsmore of ABC, Phil Taubman of The New York Times, Bob Toth of the Los Angeles Times, David Martin of Newsweek, and Greg Nokes of AP.

We will also include a UPT photographer who will be pooling for everybody and, obviously, we will make available a transcript to you just as soon as it is humanly possible to get it out.

And, other than that, the only other detail is that the interview will take place in my office, Room 6800. We'll leave it to the poolers to get the information out as soon as possible.

Q Have you got the time?

A At 2:00 p.m., yes.

Q Dean, before you leave though, there is a bit of business from yesterday concerning you. When I asked you yesterday if you had any comment on the report in the moderates inside Nicaragua, you answered you'd seen the report but you did not comments on subjects such as that.

Then last night your Press Office put out an answer which made that response of yours inoperative and, in effect, said: "Yes, we are providing a total of something like 17 million dollars in a period of two years."

It seems to me that when your office puts out an answer which is in direct contradiction to something which has been said generally that you have an obligation to make it generally known that the answer is no longer standing and that there is a change, that information put out here was wrong, and that you have an obligation -- just as we have an obligation -- to correct it as quickly as possible.

A Well, as you probably know, your colleague Mike called me on this this morning.

Q Yes.

A I said I goofed because I misunderstood the thrust of your question. I thought it had to do with a question concerning covert action. And that is the reason I responded the way I did.

Q I'm just pointing out that the answer still has not been put out generally. In order to get this, one has to go into your office and ask specifically for it and then it comes out. But it strikes me as such a logical, normal procedure that I'm surprised really it happened.

A All I can say is we goofed.

Q Dean, can I ask you why this thing has to be pooled?

A At this point it is the only way we can do it.

Q That isn't exactly what I call a complete answer. (Laughter.) Can you tell us why that's the only way you can do it?

A Because of a request that was made that we do it this way.

Q By whom?

A By the person being interviewed.

Q He doesn't like to see everybody?

Q Dean, will there be videotape and sound out of this interview, or is strictly for the four?

A We hope so, but I can't guarantee it at this point.